

Tenant Voice Annual Report 2025-2026



CHELTENHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL



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Introduction

During 2025–2026, Cheltenham Borough Council (CBC) has continued to strengthen its commitment to resident engagement, ensuring that tenants and leaseholders play a central role in shaping housing services.

This year has seen the formal adoption of the Tenant and Leaseholder Voice Plan 2025–2028, which sets out a clear and ambitious framework for how residents influence decision-making across housing services. The plan was developed collaboratively and approved by both the Tenant Panel and Leaseholder Panel, reflecting a shared vision for meaningful, transparent engagement.

Resident representatives have played an increasingly visible role in governance, with tenant and leaseholder representatives attending Housing Committee meetings, ensuring direct and transparent influence at a strategic level.

Throughout the year, we have worked in partnership with residents to review services, shape policies, and respond to key challenges—particularly in areas such as repairs, complaints, and building safety. This report highlights the progress made over the past year and demonstrates how resident voice continues to drive improvement.

Housing Committee Representation

Tenant and leaseholder representatives have continued to attend **Housing Committee meetings**, ensuring that:

- Resident voices are heard at a strategic level
- Decision-making is informed by lived experience
- Transparency and accountability are strengthened



Tenant Panel Achievements

Over the past year, the Tenant Panel has continued to provide robust challenge and constructive input across a wide range of service areas.

Governance and Development

- The panel reviewed and refreshed its Terms of Reference, strengthening clarity around roles and expectations
- Continued to develop as a confident, knowledgeable group providing effective scrutiny and challenge

Customer Promise

The Tenant Panel played a key role in refining CBC's Customer Promise.

This included:

- Simplifying and grouping commitments to improve clarity
- Making the document more concise and accessible
- Influencing the visual presentation to better engage customers
- Recommending that staff receive training on the principles to ensure consistent delivery

This work has resulted in a clearer and more customer-focused offer.



Scrutiny Review: Repairs

A major focus this year was a large-scale scrutiny review into the repairs service.

The Tenant Panel:

- Examined tenant experiences of reporting and receiving repairs
- Identified key issues including delays, communication gaps, and consistency of service
- Reviewed processes from initial report through to completion

Key themes identified:

- Communication does not always meet tenant expectations
- Lack of visibility on repair progress
- Inconsistency in service delivery

Recommendations included:

- Improved communication and updates throughout the repair journey
- Greater transparency around timescales and expectations
- Enhanced monitoring of contractor and staff performance
- Increased tenant involvement in shaping improvements

This work represents a significant contribution to ongoing service improvement.



Service Standards and Local Engagement

- John Clements, Operations Manager, worked with tenants on service standards for housing blocks, including reviewing and improving block communication materials such as posters
- The Tenant Panel provided feedback on the Tenant Handbook, which has been condensed and rewritten in a more user-friendly format. The Tenant Panel identified areas where additional clarity was needed and discussed how best to roll out the updated version to existing tenants.

Complaints Oversight

The panel received regular updates from Natasha Dhillon, Complaints Lead, improving transparency and understanding of:

- Complaint trends
- Learning from complaints
- Actions being taken to improve services

In addition, complainants from Quarter 1 were invited to attend a focus group to help us better understand their experience of the service and to share suggestions for improvement.

External Engagement – HQN

Tenant Panel members participated in an interview with the Housing Quality Network (HQN).

Feedback included:

- Positive reflections on involvement in the Tenant Panel
- The value of being able to discuss key issues such as repairs
- Recognition that CBC is listening and responding to tenant feedback

This provided independent insight into the strength of tenant engagement at CBC.



Housing Service Improvement Plan

Feedback was gathered from residents, including input linked to work led by Kerryanne Pitter, Project Manager, Housing Improvement Programme, helping to shape ongoing improvement activity.

Leaseholder Engagement

Leaseholder Policy

Leaseholders were invited to provide feedback on a new Leaseholder Policy.

Engagement included:

- Opportunities to submit comments via email
- A drop-in session held on 12 March

Feedback highlights:

- Overall response was positive
- The policy was seen as helpful, particularly in explaining the Section 20 consultation process
- Suggestions included:
 - Adding information on the percentage of leasehold properties
 - Minor grammatical improvements

All feedback was reviewed and incorporated where appropriate.

Additional Engagement

- Leaseholders engaged directly with officers, including Julian Denslow, who attended sessions to:
 - Answer questions on the Fire Safety Section 20 notice
 - Provide updates on the stock condition survey, helping leaseholders understand long-term costs



- The Terms of Reference for the Leaseholder Group were agreed, including updated wording reflecting the CBC and CBH merger

Policy Influence

Both the leaseholder and the tenant panel have played an active role in reviewing and shaping key policies and service areas, including:

- Rent Setting
- Recharge Policy
- Voids Policy
- Repairs Policy
- E-bike and Battery Policy
- Cleanliness Action Plan
- Compliance areas:
 - Electrical safety
 - Water hygiene
 - Gas and heating
 - Asbestos
 - Fire safety
- Decants
- Tenancy Policy

This demonstrates the breadth of resident influence across both strategic and operational areas.



Youth Voice

Progress has been made in developing youth engagement, recognising the importance of capturing the views of younger residents and shaping future approaches.

We recognised the need to build confidence among our young community. Community Investment Officer Alexis Turner worked with a group of young people on an ASDAN-accredited leadership course. As part of the course, young people discussed their communities and their experiences of Cheltenham, and completed a social impact project. They have since gone on to become youth mentors and will guide the next group of young people through the qualification process.

Older Adults Voice

Engagement with older residents has remained a priority.

This has included:

- Regular engagement in schemes through meetings and discussions
- Input on activity provision, garden spaces, and shared areas
- Raising and addressing common concerns

A significant piece of work was undertaken at Gilbert Ward Court, where:

- Intensive engagement supported residents affected by ongoing repairs issues. Monthly meetings are now held, giving residents the opportunity to speak directly with Aston Stevens, Resource Planning Team Leader, and Gemma Rowberry, Head of Regulatory Compliance, about their concerns.

Tenants directly influenced how issues are addressed and shared suggestions for how we can work more effectively with and around their scheme.



Community Engagement – St Paul’s

A large community survey in St Paul’s captured resident views on local priorities, helping to inform community investment activities from the St Paul’s hub, as well as informing a partnership approach to tackling ASB in the area.

Tenant Impact at a Glance:

The problem	How we engaged tenants/leaseholders	The solution / outcome
Repairs service not meeting expectations (delays, communication gaps, inconsistent delivery, limited visibility of progress)	Tenant Panel scrutiny review: examined tenant experiences of reporting/receiving repairs; reviewed end-to-end processes; identified key themes	Recommendations: improved communications and updates; greater transparency on timescales/expectations; enhanced monitoring of contractor/staff performance; increased tenant involvement in shaping improvements
Ongoing repairs issues affecting residents at Gilbert Ward Court	Intensive engagement and monthly meetings, enabling residents to speak directly with Aston Stevens (Resource Planning Team Leader) and Gemma Rowberry (Head of Regulatory Compliance)	Regular monthly forum established; issues raised directly; tenants influenced how issues are addressed and suggested ways of working more effectively around their scheme
Customer Promise needed to be clearer, more concise, accessible, and consistently delivered	Tenant Panel refined the Customer Promise, including content and presentation feedback	Commitments simplified and grouped; document made more concise and accessible; visual presentation improved; recommendation for staff training to support consistent delivery



Need for stronger governance, clarity of roles, and effective scrutiny	Tenant Panel reviewed and refreshed its Terms of Reference and continued to develop as a scrutiny/challenge group	Clearer roles and expectations; stronger, more confident scrutiny and challenge
Service standards and block communications needed improvement	John Clements (Operations Manager) worked with tenants on housing block service standards and reviewed block communication materials (e.g., posters)	Service standards shaped with tenants; improved block communication materials produced
Tenant Handbook needed to be more user-friendly and reach existing tenants effectively	Tenant Panel reviewed the Tenant Handbook and provided feedback; discussed roll-out to existing tenants	Handbook condensed and rewritten into a more user-friendly format; areas for improvement/clarity identified; distribution approach discussed
Interest in greater transparency and learning from complaints	Tenant Panel received regular updates from Natasha Dhillon (Complaints Lead) on complaint trends, learning, and actions	Improved transparency and understanding of complaints; clearer visibility of actions being taken to improve services
Need to keep tenants involved and informed throughout our Housing Service Improvement Plan	Resident feedback gathered (including input linked to work led by Kerryanne Pitter, Project Manager, Housing Improvement Programme)	Feedback used to help shape ongoing improvement activity within the Housing Service Improvement Plan
Need to develop youth engagement and build confidence among young residents	Community Investment Officer Alexis Turner worked with young people on an ASDAN-accredited leadership course, including discussion of communities/experiences and a social impact project	Young people completed the qualification and progressed into youth mentor roles to support the next cohort. Young people's voices sought in shaping community and town wide priorities.
Need to ensure older adults have a meaningful voice in	Regular scheme engagement through meetings and discussions; input sought on	Resident input informed activity provision and shared space



shaping services to meet their needs	activities, garden spaces, and shared areas	improvements; common concerns raised and addressed
Leaseholders needed a clearer understanding of the Leaseholder Policy, including the Section 20 consultation process	Leaseholders invited to comment via email and at a drop-in session (12 March)	Feedback reviewed and incorporated where appropriate; policy seen as helpful for explaining Section 20; minor improvements identified (e.g., add info on % of leasehold properties; grammar)
Questions and concerns about Fire Safety Section 20 notice	Leaseholders engaged directly with officers; Julian Denslow attended sessions to answer questions	Questions answered and understanding improved through direct officer engagement
Need for leaseholders to understand long-term costs linked to stock condition	Julian Denslow provided updates at sessions on the stock condition survey	Improved understanding of the survey and long-term cost implications
Leaseholder group governance needed up-to-date Terms of Reference reflecting the CBC and CBH merger	Leaseholders and officers agreed the Leaseholder Group Terms of Reference	Updated Terms of Reference agreed, including revised wording to reflect the merger
Local community priorities and approach to tackling ASB needed clearer resident input (St Paul's)	Large community survey in St Paul's captured resident views on local priorities	Findings informed community investment activities from the St Paul's hub and supported a partnership approach to tackling ASB in the area